

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00348 101814Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /054 W
-----101826Z 125904 /43
R 101518Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2891
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 0348

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SGEN, UR
SUBJECT: MOSCOW BAPTISTS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

REF: 76 MOSCOW 20175

1. ON JAN 6, EMBOFF AND FAMILY ATTENDED CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES IN THE MOSCOW BAPTIST CHURCH. UPON ARRIVAL, THEY WERE AT ONCE SHOWN TO A PEW RESERVED FOR GUESTS IN THE BALCONY. THE TWO-HOUR SERVICE, FEATURING AN EXCELLENT CHOIR ACCOMPANIED BY ORGAN AND SMALL ORCHESTRA (VIOLINS, ACCORDION, FLUTE, BASS, AND BALALAIKAS), PROVED TO BE A MOVING EXPERIENCE.

2. THE HYMNS AND CAROLS SUNG BOTH BY THE CHOIR AND THE CONGREGATION INCLUDED SILENT NIGHT, FIRST NOEL, AND OTHERS FAMILIAR TO AMERICANS. THE FACT THAT THEY WERE SUNG WITH DEEP FERVOR IN RUSSIAN AND WERE ACCOMPANIED BY BALALAIKAS, AMONG OTHER INSTRUMENTS, ADDED A UNIQUE AND POIGNANT FLAVOR TO THE OCCASION. THE SINGING WAS APPARENTLY BEING TAPED BY THE CHOIR CONDUCTOR.

3. A TOTAL OF FOUR SERMONS ADDRESSED THE CHRISTMAS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 00348 101814Z

THEME AND THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN. THE PRAYERS, SOME SO FERVENT THAT MANY IN THE CONGREGATION WERE BROUGHT TO TEARS, CONTAINES SOME CRYPTIC LANGUAGE: "WE PRAY FOR OUR BROTHERS WHO LIVE IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES." "LORD, YOU KNOW WHAT THE MOSCOW BAPTIST CHRUCH DESIRES AND NEEDS." PRAYERS WERE ALSO OFFERED FOR THOSE IN MOSCOW WHO DO NOT KNOW CHRIST.

THE CONGREGATION CONTAINED A MAJORITY OF WOMEN, BUT THE PROPORTION OF MEN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND CHILDREN WAS FAR LARGER THAN AT AN ORTHODOX SERVICE. TWO YOUNG SOVIET ARMY ENTLISTED MEN IN UNIFORMS APPEARED TO BE PARTICIPATING IN THE SERVICES.

4. COMMENT. ACCORDING TO AN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH MOSCOW BAPTIST LEADERS (SEE REFTTEL), THE SOVIET BAPTIST CHURCH FORMALLY ADHERES TO THE WESTERN CALENDAR IN OBSERVING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS, AND THE MAIN CHRISTMAS SERVICE THEREFORE TOOK PLACE ON DEC 25. HOWEVER, THEY DECLARED CHEERFULLY THAT BECAUSE SO MANY BAPTISTS IN OUTLAYING AREAS ARE STILL ATTACHED TO THE JULIAN CALENDAR OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH, BAPTISTS IN EFFECT CELEBRATE TWO CHRISTMASES AND TWO EASTERS, WHICH HAS THE PRACTICAL ADVANTAGE OF SPREADING OUT THE HEAVY CHURCH ATTENDANCE ON THESE OCCASIONS.

TOON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELIGIOUS GROUPS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW00348
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770009-0272
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770167/aaaacgfc.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 62f3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MOSCOW 20175
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3633120
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOSCOW BAPTISTS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS
TAGS: PINT, SGEN, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/62f3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009